
Tennessee Teacher Licensure Standards: Professional School Counselors

The Background:

The Tennessee Department of Education has recently received calls from licensed school counselors who are enrolled in initial teaching licensure programs. Although few in number, there are some Tennessee school counselors who wish to become licensed classroom teachers.

The question has emerged as to whether or not licensed school counselors should be required to complete an induction experience (either an enhanced student teaching semester or a year-long internship) as part of the teacher preparation program.

In order to provide direction and clarification to teacher preparation programs, the Department of Education proposes that an induction experience not be required for licensed school counselors who are enrolled in teacher preparation programs and are candidates for initial teaching licenses. The standards include a new program implementation standard 11 to this effect.

The rationale for the proposal is based on the following three points:

- 1) As part of current and proposed preparation, professional school counselor candidates must complete a clinical experience for at least one semester in school counseling which includes classroom guidance involving instruction (see program implementation standard 5);
- 2) The current and proposed Professional School Counselor Licensure Standards include a program implementation standard that requires counselor candidates who do not have teaching experience to participate in a semester-long orientation experience in school settings which includes classroom instruction (see program implementation standard 7); and
- 3) Licensed school counselors who complete an initial teacher preparation program must meet the standards of the Professional Education core through course work and field-based experiences.

In combination, the three points of the above rationale more than adequately prepare licensed school counselors to enter the field as first year classroom teachers.

In addition, the attached revised School Counselor Licensure Standards incorporate several other changes:

- 1) Program implementation standards 12 through 15 regarding alternative licensure include changes to ensure the standards will align with rules adopted by the Board in January.
- 2) A program implementation standard 16 has been added clarifying that professional school counselors teaching on alternate licenses must be evaluated in accordance with the *Framework for Evaluation and Professional Growth* and that they must have completed a successful evaluation prior to renewal of the alternate license;
- 3) Program implementation standard 17 updates the resource documents institutions of higher education are required to use to plan, implement and evaluate professional school counselor preparation programs.

The Recommendation:

The Advisory Council on Teacher Education and Certification recommends acceptance of the attached revised Tennessee School Professional Counselor Licensure Standards on final reading. The SDE and SBE staffs concur with this recommendation.

**Tennessee Licensure Standards:
Professional School Counselor
(Pre-K through 12)**

Date Standards Adopted or Most Recent Revision: October 21, 2005

Date Institutions Must Submit To DOE: Current

Date Candidates Must Meet Standards: September 1, 2007

Professional school counselors support teachers, other professional personnel, and parents in addressing the needs of students related to academic and career preparation and personal growth and development. An emphasis on teaching for prevention calls for the counselor to become a member of the instructional team, working closely with teachers. The counselor also works closely with school social workers, school psychologists, and family resource center staff in designing a team approach to meet student needs and overcome barriers to learning.

The professional school counselor provides instruction in small and large group settings, provides personal counseling and career guidance to individual students, and works with teachers to assist them in their role as advisors. The counselor also communicates with and provides education to parents. To assist counselors in responding effectively to the requirements of this role, institutions of higher education and local schools must collaborate in the design and implementation of professional school counselor preparation programs.

Prospective school counselors will complete studies in professional school counseling. The education and professional development of a counselor is initiated in graduate level course work, refined in field experiences, and enhanced during professional practice. Counselor preparation programs will provide the prospective candidate with the knowledge and skills to develop the following:

1. Understanding of the nature and needs of students in grade levels PreK-12. Ability to apply knowledge from the areas of human growth and development and learning theories; to identify learning problems; and to assist teachers and parents in responding to counseling and guidance interventions with students.
2. Understanding the process of social and cultural change with respect to various racial, gender, and ethnic groups, and knowledge of differing cultural and lifestyle patterns. Ability to develop plans and programs to prevent person and substance abuse, discrimination, and dropping out of school.
3. Understanding of the philosophical basis underlying the helping process. Ability to facilitate student growth and development and positive systemic change through counseling, advocacy, leadership, collaboration, and consulting activities, including contributing to the development and implementation of individualized educational programs (IEPs) for students with special needs.
4. Ability to lead large and small group counseling and guidance activities related to personal and interpersonal growth, self-help and problem solving, and career development.

5. Understanding changes in society and technology and the influence of changes on work and learning. Ability to develop and implement a comprehensive career development program.
6. Ability to assist in curriculum advisement and career counseling using a variety of materials, strategies, and technologies.
7. Understanding of appropriate tests and other assessments to assist students and their parents in making effective educational, social, and career decisions. Ability to use group-administered educational and psychological measurement and appraisal instruments.
8. Ability to plan, manage, deliver, and evaluate a comprehensive PreK-12 professional school counseling program. Understanding of research and research design. Ability to conduct research and evaluation projects related to the outcomes of professional school counseling services.
9. Understanding of the ethical and legal standards of school counseling professionals.
10. Ability to collaborate with parents, teachers, school social workers, school psychologists, family resource center staff, and other community partners in meeting student needs.
11. Ability to inform students, teachers, parents, and the community about the purposes and activities of the professional school counseling program.
12. Ability to work with parents and conduct parent education activities. Ability to use community resources and referral processes, and develop effective partnership arrangements with community agencies.

Program Implementation Standards

1. Candidates for licensure as a professional school counselor complete an approved preparation program in school counseling and a graduate degree.
2. Candidates for licensure acquire the knowledge and skills specified for professional school counselors. Candidates are recommended for licensure by an institution with an approved program in professional school counseling.
3. Professional school counselor candidates serve schools with grades pre-kindergarten through 12. Preparation programs will have identifiable aspects of both PreK-6 and 7-12 grade levels.
4. Institutions of higher education with approved preparation programs for professional school counselors work in collaboration with local school systems in the planning and delivery of preparation programs.

5. Institutions of higher education and local school systems jointly organize the professional counselor clinical experience, comprised of both practicum and internship experiences, and are delineated in a written agreement. The clinical experience is the equivalent of at least a full semester in length. School counseling opportunities at both the PreK-6 and 7-12 grade levels will be provided to the candidate during the clinical experience. The combined school settings include a diversity of students. Candidates have an opportunity to demonstrate skills in individual and group counseling, teacher and parent consultation, classroom guidance, building cooperative relationships in the school, leadership, advocacy, and development of partnerships with community resources.
6. Candidates participating in the clinical experience are advised and guided by a site supervisor who has at least two years experience as a school counselor. Individuals serving as site supervisors are selected jointly by the school system and the institution of higher education, receive training as a site supervisor, and indicate a willingness to serve and to remain current in their field.
7. Professional school counselor candidates without prior teaching experience will have an additional orientation experience in a school as an early part of the preparation program. The orientation experience provides candidates the opportunity to observe, participate in, and analyze classroom instruction. The orientation provides the candidate with teaching experiences and feedback regarding the candidate's teaching.
8. Institutions of higher education offering approved programs in school counseling develop and submit to the State Department of Education for approval admissions procedures that include:
 - a) Assessment of personal characteristics and academic proficiency of the candidate as required by NCATE for programs at the advanced level; and
 - b) An interview or review of the candidate's application by an admissions board comprised of one or more practicing school counselors as well as one or more faculty from curriculum and instruction, educational administration, professional school counseling, or other appropriate faculties.
9. Programs school counseling reflect the current knowledge base in school counseling and in teaching and learning, include faculty members in professional school counseling and other appropriate faculties, and are approved by the State Board of Education in accordance with the Teacher Education Policy and Program Approval Procedures adopted by the State Board of Education. Preparation programs are encouraged to meet the standards of the Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP).
10. School counselors who serve in a supervisory role are not required to have an endorsement in administration/supervision or as a beginning administrator; however, they are encouraged to attain comparable administrative preparation.

11. Licensed school counselors who are candidates for an initial teaching license are not required to have an additional induction experience (either as an enhanced student teaching semester or a year-long internship).
12. Candidates from Tennessee and from other states who are licensed and endorsed at the graduate level in school counseling in Pre-K-8 or 7-12 may be granted the PreK-12 license provided they have met one of the following conditions:
 - a) The candidate has at least one year of documented successful counselor experience in the grade span not covered by the existing endorsement and has a positive recommendation by the school; or
 - b) The candidate has six hours of graduate course work in current content in school counseling in the grade span not covered by the existing endorsement. Candidates submit evidence of completion of the six hours directly to the Department of Education, Office of Teacher Licensing.

If the candidate lacks (a) or (b), the candidate may be issued an Alternative Type I license endorsed counseling Pre-K-12, provided the superintendent indicates an intent to employ. The candidate must complete the required six hours of course work in current content in the area of school counseling in the grade span not covered by the existing endorsement. Candidates must submit evidence of completion of the six hours directly to the Department of Education, Office of Teacher Licensing before the alternative license is renewed or before issuance of a regular license.

13. Candidates who have not yet completed the required clinical experience may be employed on an Alternative License Type I provided that the following conditions are met:
 - a) The counselor preparation institution in which they are enrolled certifies that the candidate can complete the PreK-12 school counselor program within two years consistent with the institution's criteria;
 - b) The candidate receives appropriate supervision by the institution during the clinical experience; and
 - c) The local education agency certifies through a written agreement with the counselor preparation institution that the candidate will receive direct supervision by a licensed school counselor (having a minimum of two years experience as a school counselor) for a minimum of one hour per week and provide the opportunity to meet the grade level requirements necessary to certification.
14. Candidates who hold a graduate degree in community/agency counseling may be employed on an Alternative License Type I, provided the following conditions are met:

- a) The candidate is enrolled in an approved graduate program in professional school counseling;
 - b) The candidate has completed at least 24 hours in graduate course work applicable to the professional school counseling program; and
 - c) The local education agency certifies through a written agreement with the counselor preparation institution that the candidate will receive direct supervision by a licensed school counselor (having a minimum of two years experience as a school counselor) for a minimum of one hour per week.
15. Candidates who hold at least a master's degree in a counseling program or related field, such as school social work or school psychology, and have appropriate clinical experience may be employed on an Alternative Type II license provided the following conditions are met:
- a) The candidate successfully completes the specialty examination required by the State Board of Education; and
 - b) The local education agency certifies that the candidate will receive direct supervision by a licensed school counselor (having a minimum of two years experience as a school counselor) for a minimum of one hour per week; and
- Prior to the first renewal of the alternate license, the candidate must enroll in an approved professional school licensure program and must submit evidence of satisfactory annual progress. The candidate must complete course work appropriate to the candidate's needs not to exceed 24 semester hours in an approved professional school counselor licensure program before the issuance of a regular license.
16. All candidates teaching on alternative licenses must be evaluated in accordance with procedures approved by the State Board of Education. Prior to the first renewal of the license, the candidates must have completed a successful evaluation.
17. Institutions of higher education use the following documents (as they may be amended) when planning, implementing and evaluating school counselor preparation programs: Tennessee Model for Comprehensive School Counseling (2005); CACREP 2001 Standards for Accreditation, Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (2001); Ethical Standards for School Counselors (2004); Code of Ethics, American School Counselor Association (2005); and current research related to school counseling.
18. The revised standards become effective no later than September 1, 2007.